Dear Mary,

Jim asked me to listen to the Beverly Oliver interview and give him my opinions. Last night, my hands so full of fine thorns I feared typing, I did. Considering the conditions of the making of the tape, it is a fine one. But considering that this is a dub of a dub, much of it is incomprehensible. Of what can be made out, a large part is fascinating. Clearly she knows things. But what she knows and what she is improvising is hard to separate. In the important area, is she the Babushka Lady, my impression is that she is not, cannot be and is untruthful.

A general, if unsolicited comment: next time you have such a witness, do it yourself. Whether you were motivated by a desire to be cooperative, a fear that in some way you were inadequate, or what, I can't know. But I do know that the others were no help to you and often cut her off at the wrong times with vain interjections, foolish questions unrelated to what she was talking about, and often smothered what she was saying with prolonged, raucous and inappropriate laughter. Yours is the only real questioning that I could make out. You led her into enough byways to come back and ask the same question in different ways, to get a check on what she'd say, without the digressions by others, no one of which that I can recall having been at all productive.

I'd like to know more about her. The first part of the tape is almost entirely incomprehensible. There is much she could have known from being one of the club girls and from this she could have imrpovised an enormous amount based on what appeared in the press and what she'd been told by others.

Separating what one gets from a psychopathic liar who does know things is always a problem. It has been most difficult for me with women, perhaps in part because I can't bring myself to treat them as roughly as I can men. What I have usually done is what you did, just keep them going to give them full opportunity to cross themselves up.

Generally speaking, if you conduct an interview with more than yourself and the witness, you wind up with cross-talk on the tape and later can't make things out. This increases geometrically with the number of people. I have often interviewed witnesses with another present, for often the second person can make valuable contributions. But my experience indicates that it is generally better to do it alone. One wrong, if seriously-intended question asked at the crucial moment can change the direction of the entire interview, turn the witness off, etc. And in this case, you really got no help. Arch's voice records so poorly that I couldn't make out what he was asking, so if he was of help, I couldn't detect it. I imagine he could have been, more so without the others, for whom I imagine you both have more respect than is warranted in such matters.

It is more than an impression that tells me Beverly was lying. Here are a few of the things I recall (subject, of course, to my misunderstanding poor parts of the dub-but again, under the circumstances, that you got as much is simply incredible!). Oswald had a CIA card? Never! She didn't know what the CIA is? She didn't know Nancy? By the time of the interview she should have heard of her, if not contemporaneously. Her story on the film is inherently unbelievable. The agents don't give or carry cards, they show identifications. I know of no case where they didn't return an edited version of the film they got when they wanted its content hidden. The in no case of which I know kept the film. If she caught any part of the assassination on film, it is illogical to assume that she'd not have rushed it into processing, for it would have been worth a fortune, and if that didn't occur to her, how about natural curiosity, a desire to show it to others? Not is it easy to believe that she never went back to get the processed crowd scenes. If I understood it, she worked for Ruby and didn't know Eva Grant of George Senator? The part about knowing so many men from New Orleans, including Marcello, when she was only 18, is hard to credit. The laws are severe with respect to females below the age of consent. The story that Larry Taylor was supposed to kill Castro is hard to credit and fits too well with what had been in the

papers, what Garrison spoke about so much. Her explanations dealing with taking the film out of the camera stretch a willingness to believe and are too elaborate. If she didn't continue to film, which is what I think she said, in itself is enough to establish that she is not the B. lady, who is clearly visible grinding away as the motorcade disappears under the Triple Underpass. She also didn't talk much after such an experience. She was when the police and an FBI agent were within 10 minutes of the shooting, had a visible camera and wasn't asked for the film when there was a veritable shuttle to the sheriff's office? And other things.

There remain areas of interest I hope you can follow. One is her repeated reference to her late husbands telephone books. Another is that she "worked" for Bill Decker? I presume she was a stoolie of some kind. Penn would argue her statement that Decker was "the most honest law man I ever met", but I also suggest that for one of her tender years, it is not likely that she worked for many law men, unless it includes after the assassination, when she was only 18. Starting at 13 was pretty young for such clubs, even if Ruby, as I have just learned, preferred them young. Isn't that an invitation to trouble from authorities and parents?

Another suggestion for when you make a tape under such circumstances, coming from my own recent experiences taping Ray, whose voice does not record well: have the subject closest to the mike. In my last Ray interview I had it facing him. I found his voice better than in any previous tape and mine came on okay.

When you come back from Germany, if you have the time it might be a good idea to speak to her again, if you have time, this time by yourself, so you can ask what you want, say what you want (and if you lean on her a bit it will be less embarrassing to her without so many observers) and not be as diverted (that question, did she know Nagell, is one of the too-frequent interruptions that were irrevelant and changed the subject, but typical of the problem with this and with multiple-questioner interviews) so that you can keep in mind what you are after. If she is a liar, it will be better if you have in mind what you want to ask, but not have it organized so that she can anticipate what you will ask and be prepared. It is better if you mix it up so she can't cook up responses by anticipating what you'll be going into.

I haven't read Jack Ruby's Girls, so I don't know how much she could have learned from reading such works. I have little doubt that she had to know some of the people of whom she spoke, though. In itself, this can be fascinating. The entire tape is.

I shall regard this as confidential, as your interview, not to be used.

Best